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The capabilities for conducting effective intelligence gathering and paramilitary operations have long been essential tools in the conduct of national policy. Unfortunately, however, certain misconceptions regarding the manner and circumstances in which they can be employed arose in this country after World War II and led directly to setbacks like the Bay of Pigs. Rather than shunning the possibility of using covert operations in the future to gain policy objectives, experiences like the Bay of Pigs merely underline the fact that policymakers must be educated as to what is possible, and the responsibility for this lies with the career intelligence community.

## PARAMILITARY CASE STUDY

### THE BAY OF PIGS

A lecture delivered

by

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CPYRGHT

I think that the usual caveat is necessary before I get into the subject at hand. What I am about to say today are my personal views; they do not represent the official CIA view nor the official U.S. Government view. This is an after-action report on an episode in our history which engendered perhaps the most intense emotions and public reaction we have seen since World War II.

President Kennedy in the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs made the comment that "Victory has a hundred fathers; defeat is an orphan." I would simply say that as Inspector General of the CIA at the time, I was probably in charge of the orphanage.

There is a very specific definition of covert operations. In the broad literature of intelligence, covert operations are about as old as espionage, which has been called the world's second oldest profession. To be properly considered covert, an operation must be designed in such a way that it can easily be disavowed by the originating government. The hand of the sponsor must not be visible.

Covert operations, on the other hand, must not be confused with irregular warfare. An example of irregular warfare that has received recent worldwide attention is the operation in Laos. Everybody on both sides knows who is doing what to whom; the aid and assistance is obvious. That is irregular warfare. A covert operation, however, to be totally covert must be so clandestine, so well hidden, that its true sources may never be specifically proven. Guesses, allegations, speculations may be made in

the public media, but no proof or verification is permissible if the operation is to be properly considered covert.

At this point in our discussion I believe it will prove helpful to simply list some of the questions that must be asked before a covert operation is properly undertaken.

- Can it be done covertly? Can the role of the sponsoring government be sufficiently concealed at each step so as to avoid disclosure and thus either failure or a diplomatic setback for the sponsor? And if the cover of the operation is destroyed at any stage, are alternative measures or withdrawal possible?

- Are the assets available to do the job required? Are the indigenous personnel available who are secure and in the proper place to do the work required? If not, are there those available who can be put into place?

- Are all of the assets of the sponsoring government being used? Can the operation be controlled? Will the indigenous forces being used respond to direction or are they likely to go off on their own? Will they accept cancellation of the operation at any time?

- If it succeeds or fails, will they maintain silence? The maxim "Silence is golden" has never been fully accepted in this country, but it is still worth asking. Also, can it be handled securely within the sponsoring government?

- Finally, and this is perhaps the most important question the United States must ask, is the risk worth the potential gain? Has there been a true evaluation of the chance of success or failure by an objective group not di-

rectly or indirectly involved with its implementation? Do the policymakers have a realistic understanding of the operation?

These are some of the basic questions which must be asked prior to the mounting of any clandestine or covert operation.

Before turning to the case study itself, a brief review of recent Cuban history is appropriate. Fidel Castro landed in eastern Cuba in 1956 with what turned out to be 12 men. He gathered forces in the Sierra Maestra in 1956 and 1957. Even more important, however, was the growth of anti-Batista groups in the cities of Cuba among the middle class, the professionals, and the elite. It was the erosion of Batista's vital political support in the cities which led directly to his downfall. The guerrillas in the countryside served merely as a catalyst in this process. And eventually, on 1 January 1959, Castro stepped into the vacuum left by the fleeing Batista.

A fact which many people do not seem to recall was that despite our misgivings about Fidel Castro, and the U.S. Government did have them, we recognized his government fairly promptly. The first cabinet of the Castro regime was probably one of the finest in Cuban history. It is worthy to note, however, that very few of the new Cabinet members stayed very long.

In addition to recognizing Castro, the United States continued its subsidy of Cuba's sugar crop which at that time amounted to approximately \$100 million. The three major U.S. oil companies doing business in Cuba advanced him \$29 million because his treasury was bare when he took over. Batista and his cohorts had seen to that. Castro was not invited to the United States on an official trip, but he came here unofficially to attend a meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington, and he did have an interview with the then Vice President of the United States, Richard M. Nixon. Then, one by one, the men around Castro began dropping off. He speedily expropriated U.S. property worth \$968 million. Even his closest bar-bados—the bearded ones—that had been with him in the hills started to turn against him as he appointed more and more Communists, and by the middle of 1960 it became obvious that the United States was not going to be able to do business with Fidel. This, I might say, was a very great shock to Americans. Cuba was a country that we regarded as our protégé. We had helped liberate it from Spain; we had assisted it through the

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